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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0115  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1594  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2358  
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0257  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1017  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW SENATE PRESIDENT'S AGENDA

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 128

Classified By: Ambassador Janet Sanderson. Reason: E.O. 12958 1.4 (b)  
, (d)

Summary

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11. (C) As told to the Ambassador, priorities of newly elected Senate President Kely Bastien are 1) improving the working relationship with the lower house of the legislature and the Executive Branch; 2) preserving political stability by heading off legislative efforts to vote ministers out of office; 3) consulting with committee heads of both houses and the government to work out a legislative agenda; and 4) working with the Provisional Electoral Council and the Ministry of the Interior to keep the elections process on track. Bastien supports constitutional reform according to procedures contained in the constitution. End Summary.

12. (C) Ambassador called on newly elected Senate President Kely Bastien in his office January 25. Bastien gave the impression of striving to set an agenda quickly. He listed his objectives as, first, improving the quality of Senate administrations by vetting all Senate staff and possibly firing those who failed; second, effecting a rapprochement with the Chamber of Deputies and better cooperation with the Executive branch; third, drawing up a legislative agenda based on consultations with Senate committee chairmen, the Chamber of Deputies, and the government; fourth, improving coordination with international donors assisting Haiti's legislature; and fifth, preserving overall political stability by consulting with the Chamber of Deputies on reducing or eliminating interpellation of ministers for a vote of no confidence.

13. (C) Finally, Bastien indicated his intention of calling in the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and the Minister of Interior to discuss keeping the schedule of Senate elections on track. The ten two-year Senators would have to depart office May 8, 2008, whether the law governing Senate elections was passed by that date or not (Note: a January 17 Senate resolution says the terms of the two-year Senators will conclude upon passage of the electoral law. May 8 is the two-year anniversary of their taking office. End note.) Bastien wanted the government to quickly submit its draft

electoral law to the legislature.

¶4. (C) Expanding on the theme of Executive-Legislative relations, Bastien said that working with the Preval/Alexis administration posed no problems for him. He said that he considers President Preval a personal friend. Bastien judged that tension with the Executive was more an issue in the Chamber of Deputies. He commented that the January 17 "State of the Union" speeches by President Preval and PM Alexis had properly focused on security and stability. However, the government has a "communications problem" in failing to explain its policies to the public. The government, he said, needs a "real agenda."

¶5. (C) Bastien declared he supported reforming the 1987 constitution -- but according to the procedures stipulated in the constitution. Having elections every two years was too expensive for Haiti. Continuing this will also produce falling voter turnout. The multi-tiered system of local self-government is too burdensome for Haiti.

¶6. (C) Comment: Our initial encounter with the youthful Bastien, who appears to be in his early 40s, shows him a more thoughtful and articulate leader than his predecessor, Joseph Lambert. He is also not clouded by suspicions of ties to drug trafficking that plagued Lambert. We also sense that Bastien enjoys greater respect among his colleagues. His skills at managing his fractious colleagues as well as ties with both the lower chamber and the Executive remain to be proven. End comment.

SANDERSON